

St. James Church
Stanton, New Castle County
Delaware

HABS No. Del- 55 /

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Delaware

Historic American Buildings Survey
Weston H. Blake, District Officer
909 West Street, Wilmington, Delaware

ST JAMES CHURCH
Near Stanton, New Castle County, Del.

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Owner: Rector, Wardens and Vestry of St James' Church.

Erected: 1820.


Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One with gallery on three sides.

Materials of Construction: Stone stuccoed, interior wood, wood shingle roof.

Other Existing Records: Bennett, G. F., "Early Architecture of Delaware"; Perry Williams, ed., "Papers Relating to the History of the Church in Delaware."

Additional Data: This building houses one of the oldest church congregations in Delaware. The original church of wood construction was built in 1716 and was a Chapel of Ease to Immanuel Church at New Castle. Note the Greek characteristic of the door and window frame details. The bell tower is a later addition.


Weston H. Blake,

District Officer.

ST. JAMES PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

An Addendum to
St. James Church
Stanton, Delaware
in HABS Catalog (1941)

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Location: Southwest corner of St. James Church Road, and
Old Capitol Trail, Stanton (Mill Creek Hundred),
New Castle County, Delaware.

Present Owner: Episcopal Diocese of Delaware.

Present Occupant: St. James Protestant Episcopal Church.

Present Use: Church.

Statement of
Significance: A small rural church of the 19th century with
interesting details and pleasant surroundings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The first services on the site of this church were held in 1677. In 1716, it was decided to build a church; the frame was raised by December of that same year. The opening service was held in July of 1717. In 1720 ten acres of land were deeded to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, for the use of St. James' Church by James Robinson. The original church burned in 1820; the present stone church was built and completed in 1822, and consecrated on August 14, 1823, by the Rev. William White, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania.
2. Original plans: The original building was a rectangular (35' x 39' stone), two-story structure with the main axis running north and south. There were entrances and stair towers on the east and west sides.
3. Notes on alterations and additions: A melodeon was purchased in 1857; two years later additional land for the cemetery was purchased. A wall was built around this land and horse sheds (no longer extant) were built. In 1890-91, a new altar was built.

After major repairs and renovations, a reopening service was held on June 3, 1894, with Bishop Leighton Coleman, presiding. The chancel had been rebuilt and new furniture installed. A stained glass window had been presented by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pilling. The tower and belfry were in course of erection.

During the summer of 1942, the church was renovated, the original pews, still in use, were painted white with mahogany trim, the walls were painted ivory with white trim, Venetian blinds were installed, the belfry was rebuilt and the exterior woodwork was painted white. The church was reopened in October 1942. The interior was renovated again around 1958 but the original woodwork was retained.

B. Sources of Information

Bennett, George F., Early Architecture of Delaware. Wilmington: Historical Press, 1932.

Cooch, Francis A., Little Known History of Newark, Delaware and its Environs. Newark, Delaware: The Press of Kells, 1936.

Echman, Jeanette, Ed., Delaware, A Guide to the First State. New York: The Viking Press, 1938.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware, 1609-1888, Vol. II. Philadelphia: L. J. Richards & Co., 1888.

"This is Delaware; Stanton and Cooch's Bridge," Evening Journal, Wilmington, Delaware, Saturday, August 5, 1961.

Zebley, Frank R., The Churches of Delaware. Wilmington: Frank R. Zebley, 1947.

Prepared by William B. Bassett
Architectural Historian
with the cooperation of
Robert L. Raley, AIA
June 1965.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A fine rural church of small scale and tasteful detail.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent state of preservation.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: Two stories, three bays by three bays, thirty-five feet by thirty-nine feet, rectangular shape with three square extensions for entry (east), apse (north), and vestry (west).
2. Foundations: Stone rubble and mortar.
3. Wall construction: Stone rubble and mortar with partially stuccoed surface.
4. Bulkheads: One bulkhead south of east entry tower leads down to cellar.
5. Chimneys: One brick chimney at south end of roof just west of gable peak.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Wooden eight-panelled doors; main entry (east) door and vestry (west) door with five-light windows above and single reeded surrounds. Semicircular fanlight over south entry.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Seven, eight-over-twelve-light wooden double-hung upper windows; six, twelve-over-twelve-light wooden double-hung lower windows; two, twelve-over-twelve-light wooden double-hung windows midway and flanking apse; three wooden round-headed windows; one louvered round arch vent in vestry gable; pointed-arch stained glass apsidal window; and wooden bow-front Palladian window (nine-over-nine lights, three-over-three side lights) with single reeded surround.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with wooden shingles; skirt roof and pyramidal roof with wooden shingles on bell tower.
 - b. Cornice: Box cornice with wooden molding above and below.
8. Bell tower: Over main entry (east) at attic level, a bell tower with skirt roof and open wooden frame belfry houses a single bell. A single wooden crucifix surmounts the whole.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The axis of the main floor runs generally north-south with the main entry tower to the east. There is a center-aisle exterior doorway, a vestry doorway

to the west, and a shallow main apse to the north. A central seating area contains seven box pews; seating areas of five box pews are at each of the rear corners and there are three box pews on each side flanking the center and adjacent to the altar area which is fronted by a kneeling rail. There is a pulpit to the left of the altar.

A U-shaped wooden balcony is supported on five wooden Tuscan columns. An organ is located at rear center of the balcony (with pews on either side). There are two rows of pews and access aisle on each side of the balcony.

2. Stairways: There is a fourteen riser, closed wooden stairway off the main entry which leads to the balcony landing (utility closet below). Two risers up from landing to rear of pews in balcony and two risers down to front balcony pew. Steps in exterior bulkhead south of main entry give access to cellar.
3. Flooring: Wall-to-wall carpeting covers new oak flooring laid over new floor joists on steel beam supported by three lally columns.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Bowed ceiling and walls of white plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Two wooden-paneled double doors made of three small horizontal panels above and one vertical panel below give access to main entry (east) and opposite vestry (west).
6. Decorative features and trim: Mahogany-colored wooden handrail at top of all box pews and square-balustered balcony railing. Balcony front of wooden panels.
7. Hardware: Several old door latches, silver doorknobs, and main entry iron box latch.
8. Lighting: Modern electric hanging brass fixture, and double wall sconces of period design.
9. Heating: Hot air with floor outlets.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The structure is located in a rapidly developing area of apartment complexes. Main entry facade parallels St. James Church Road which runs generally north-south.

2. Landscaping: A small cemetery within a four-foot high and eighteen-inch wide rubble and mortar wall with wooden outslowing top surrounds the church. A new (constructed--Spring 1965) circular concrete walk retains evergreen tree before main entry.

Prepared by William B. Bassett
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
June 1965